

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 NEA-10 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00

DRC-01 /168 W

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R 022100Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JM

SUBJ: 35TH ANNUAL PNP CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: AT THE SEPT 30 PARTY CONFERENCE THE PM REPEATED GOJ SUPPORT FOR UNSC RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL, LAUDED THE US FOR SUPPORT IN THE SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM, STATED THAT THE TRAVEL FUNDS OF VOLUNTEERS FOR AFRICA WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM JAMAICA'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE OAU, AND CRITICIZED HIS CRITICS. A GOVERNMENT MINISTER, TO HIS SURPRISE, FINDS SUPPORT FOR MANLEY AT A HIGH LEVEL. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING THREE DAYS OF INTENSE WORKSHOPS AND GROUP MEETINGS ALL IN CLOSED SESSION, PRIME MINISTER MANLEY GAVE THE CLOSING ADDRESS OF THE 35TH ANNUAL PNP PARTY CONFERENCE ON SUNDAY, SEPT 30. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED AT THE OUTSET THAT THIS YEAR'S SPEECH WOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY NEW POLICY DEPARTURES, BUT WOULD RATHER BE A SUMMING UP OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAST YEAR. THE CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY ABOUT 3,000 PARTY STALWARTS WHOSE ATTENTION TENDED TO WANE AS THE PRIME MINISTER ENTERED THE SECOND

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HOUR OF HIS SPEECH.

3. IN OPENING, THE PRIME MINISTER INTRODUCED VISITORS FROM ABROAD WHICH INCLUDED THE CHAIRMAN AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL OF GUYANA'S PNC AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE JAMAICA PROGRESSIVE LEAGUES OF NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA AND LOS ANGELES. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO A REVIEW OF THE YEAR WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE WAVE OF CRITICISM THAT HE HAS FACED SINCE HIS SEPT 14 RETURN FROM THE ALGIERS CONFERENCE.

4. IN THE STRONGEST TERMS, THE PM DENIED THAT HIS PARTY HAD ANY INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING A ONE-PARTY GOVERNMENT IN JAMAICA. HE REITERATED HIS OWN STRONG COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND BELIEF THAT JAMAICA WOULD PROSPER. HE DENIED THE RUMORS THAT WERE BEING SPREAD SUGGESTING THAT THE PNP INTENDED TO REORGANIZE THE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT, IN FACT, THE PARTY SECRETARIATE WAS STUDYING PLANS FOR A REORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY; THESE PLANS SHOULD NOT BE MIS-INTERPRETED.

5. REACTING TO THE STRONG CRITICISM THAT HAS COME FROM CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, MANLEY SAID HE STRONGLY BELIEVED IN THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, BUT THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA, NOT THE JMA OR THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. SUCH OPPOSITION WAS CREATING DIVISIONS WITHIN THE COUNTRY WHEN IT CRITICIZED HIS EFFORTS TO HELP "SUFFERERS" AND AFRICAN BROTHERS." HE REITERATED HIS LINE THAT HE HAD FOUGHT ON BEHALF OF FREEDOM IN WORLD WAR II AND HIS FATHER HAD ALSO IN WORLD WAR I. WHY, THEREFOR, SHOULD NOT JAMAICANS FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF FREEDOM NOW. HE SAID THAT PEOPLE WERE ALREADY COMING TO JAMAICA HOUSE TO VOLUNTEER AND THAT HE HOPED JAMAICANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE WOULD VOLUNTEER, BE THEY WHITE, SYRIAN, BLACK, OR BROWN. HE SAID THAT ANY COSTS INCURRED IN TRANSPORTING VOLUNTEERS TO AFRICA WOULD BE DEDUCTED FROM JAMAICA'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE OAU FREEDOM FUND, COUNTERING ARGUMENTS THAT JAMAICA COULD NOT AFFORD SUCH A VENTURE.

6. REACTING TO PERIODIC ALLEGATIONS THAT THE PNP GOVERNMENT WAS LEADING THE NATION TOWARD COMMUNISM, MANLEY SAID "WE DON'T WANT COMMUNISM; UNDER A COMMUNIST SYSTEM THE STATE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE INDIVIDUAL." MANLEY BELIEVED IN THE INDIVIDUAL, HE SAID. (THE CROWD REACTED VERY FAVORABLY TO THIS REMARK.)

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7. MANLEY DWELT AT LENGTH ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MINORITY GROUPS. HE SAID THAT HE WAS COLOR-BLIND. HE STOOD FOR THE "SUFFERERS" ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE, HOWEVER. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT TRYING TO TAKE FROM THOSE WHO HAVE SOMETHING, BUT WAS TRYING TO CREAT MORE SO THAT THOSE WHO HAD NOTHING MIGHT LEAD A LITTLE BETTER LIFE.

8. ON EMMIGRATION, MANLEY SAID HE WAS SORRY PEOPLE WERE LEAVING. THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT DRIVING THEM OUT.

9. MANLEY STATED THAT JAMAICA FULLY SUPPORTS THE UNSC RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL.

10. THE ONLY OTHER REFERENCE TO A FOREIGN NATION WAS MANLEY'S THANKS TO THE US FOR ITS SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT US-JAMAICAN RELATIONS WERE VERY GOOD AND, TO EMPHASIZE THIS, NOTED THAT A US OFFICIAL WAS COMING IN THE NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS

HIGH PROTEIN FOOD.

11. COMMENT. WHILE MANLEY'S SPEECH WAS IN A LOWER KEY THAN SOME OF HIS RECENT STATEMENTS, THERE WAS LITTLE IN IT TO REASSURE JAMAICA'S SKITTISH MERCANTILE COMMUNITY. IN DISCUSSING AFRICA, HE ESCHEWED REFERENCES TO THE BLACK-WHITE CONTEST IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND PHRASED HIS STATEMENT IN TERMS OF FREEDOM. HIS THIN-SKINNEDNESS REMAINS APPARENT IN HIS INSISTENCE UPON COUNTER-ATTACKING AGAINST HIS CRITICS, RATHER THAN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN AREAS THAT SORELY NEED IT - EXHORTATION TO EDUCATION AND FAMILY PLANNING. HE DID, HOWEVER, WEIGH IN ON PRODUCTIVITY, NOTING THAT ONLY THROUGH INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY JAMAICA WOULD BE ABLE TO MODERNIZE.

12. A GOVERNMENT MINISTER TOLD ME AT LUNCH ON THE FOLLOWING DAY THAT HE HAD APPROACHED THE PARTY CONFERENCE FULLY EXPECTING THE ENTHUSIASM FOR MANLEY TO HAVE DIMINISHED DURING THE PAST YEAR, MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE PERSISTENT CRIME AND COST-OF-LIVING PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN PROVEN WRONG; THE ENTHUSIASM APPEARED TO BE UNDIMINISHED. (NOTE: THE GATHERING WAS PERHAPS TOO PARTISAN TO BE AN ACCURATE MEASURE OF SUPPORT FOR MANLEY.) THE MINISTER NOW BELIEVED THAT MANLEY'S INSTINCTS HAVE BEEN RIGHT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KINGST03405
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731056/aaaabpmm.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <30-Jan-2002 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 35TH ANNUAL PNP CONFERENCE
TAGS: PINT, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005